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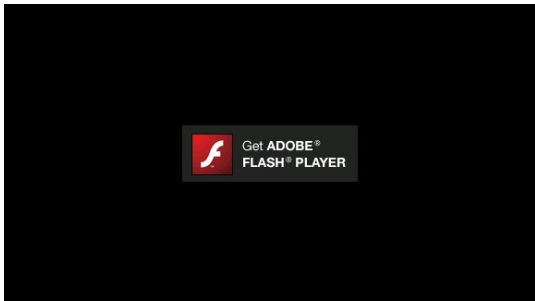
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Local Daley calls for probe of Mich. oil spill

Friday, July 30, 2010



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Ravi Baichwal
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July 29, 2010 (CHICAGO) (WLS) — Chicago Mayor Richard Daley demanded a criminal investigation into an oil spill in the Kalamazoo River in Michigan after the leak spread to just 80 miles from Lake Michigan.

The governor of Michigan says it would be a "tragedy of historic proportions" if the oil is allowed to reach the lake.

The oil began leaking into the Kalamazoo River on Monday not far from Battle Creek, Michigan. It has moved 35 miles downstream and is getting close to Kalamazoo.

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It is refined Canadian crude that is supposed to be headed back to Canada. But Monday Canadian energy company Enbridge's pipeline failed just east of Battle Creek, MI.

And now the mayor is saying the threat of spilled oil far outweighs what Asian carp could do to Lake Michigan.

"Oil is worse than carp. Oil basically destroys your drinking water," said Daley.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the leak dumped more than 1 million gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River and a creek that flows into it on Monday. The company's estimate is smaller - 819,000 gallons.

The leak happened where the pipe was corroded at Marshall Township and the oil is now just east of Morrow Lake, MI, a key tributary feeding into Lake Michigan.

The 30-inch pipeline was built in 1969 and carries about 8 million gallons of oil daily from Griffith, Ind., to Samia, Ontario. "We are very concerned about citizens being on this river, drinking the water. We are concerned about the habitat and the wildlife," said Governor Jennifer Granholm, Michigan.

Michigan officials had some 50 families evacuated from their homes near the spill — and even Battle Creek's Kellogg cereal plant stopped production for a few hours Thursday. The EPA mounted a last stand to stop the oil at Morrow Lake and reported progress Thursday night.

"I did not observe any sheen of oil on Morrow Lake. The more sobering news is that we have a lot of work left yet to do," said Susan Hedman, EPA administrator.

Daley has been criticized for questioning Michigan's response to the spill in the context of Michigan's aggressive actions — including a lawsuit — to shut down locks and shipping in Illinois to prevent the Asian carp from getting into the lake.

At the Shedd Aquarium, stewards of this seascape say it's politics as to what's worse.

"We utilize the oil and there is impact on the damage there. With the carp, we did employ it for pest control. It's a natural fish but it just doesn't occur in this habitat so you could argue on both accounts that they don't belong in this habitat," said Dr. Ilze Berzins Shedd Aquarium.

Enbridge apparently was warned by the EPA that the way it was monitoring corrosion in that pipeline was not up to changing EPA standards. They were warned in a letter that went to the head of the company back in January. This leak happened some six months later.

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4 comments

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1 jodes54 7/29/10 7:42 PM EDT

That pipe was build in 1969 over 40 years ago. Who is responsible for monitoring it? It's no different then our aging electrical grid, highways, bridges, etc. Instead of making a gazillion dollars in profits, open up jobs that will rebuild what is needed in America. That's just gross. [Mark As Violation](#)

2 jodes54 7/29/10 8:03 PM EDT

Corporations need to be accountable and if so criminally charged. It's about time. Who was lining their pockets and polluting? [Mark As Violation](#)

3 joglover93 7/29/10 8:27 PM EDT

If you don't know what your what you are talking about ..don't post ####. The pipeline business is heavily regulated by the government since the Bellingham incident in the stste of Washington. The heavy rains could of washed the pipeline out at the stream causing it break or rupture. It also could been hit by a third party such as a utility company. The pipeline companies have corrosion protection system and a pretty extensive inspection program with the use of smart pigs. Fol... [Mark As Violation](#)

4 iamsparky2 7/30/10 10:32 AM EDT

Apparently, joglover missed the part about the pipeline failing "where it was corroded" in the article. While it is true that pipeline companies are required to have an active anti-corrosion program and system in place for their lines, and they are to do regular "pigging" inspections, it's pretty clear this didn't happen here. Time for major scrutiny of Enbridge's policies and programs. [Mark As Violation](#)

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